United Nations A/68/PV.82

General Assembly
Sixty-eighth session

Official Records

82nd plenary meeting
Thursday, 10 April 2014, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ashe ..... (Antigua and Barbuda)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Khiari (Tunisia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 12

Global road safety crisis

Note by the Secretary-General (A/68/368)

Draft resolution (A/68/L.40)

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation to introduce draft resolution A/68/L.40.

Mr. Kiryanov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Road safety has been and remains one of the today's most pressing issues. Deaths and injuries in road traffic accidents pose a serious threat to global health and have a very negative impact on social and economic progress and sustainable development.

The inclusion of road safety in the agenda of the General Assembly has contributed to a better understanding by the international community of the magnitude of the problem and, as a result, has led to an acceleration of Government action and greater support from the United Nations and other international organizations at the national, regional and global levels. In that regard, it is necessary to emphasize the crucial role of the first Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety, held in Moscow in 2009, which was of paramount importance. The Moscow declaration adopted as an outcome of the Conference called upon Member States to declare 2011-2020 the Decade of Action for Road Safety.

Resolutions 64/255 and 66/260, adopted in 2010 and 2012, respectively, upon the initiative of the Russian Federation, triggered the launch within the framework of the Decade of a large-scale campaign to stabilize and reduce the global fatality rate due to road traffic accidents. Targeted steps by the international community to reduce road traffic injuries have already brought about positive results. Accordingly, over the past few years, we have seen a downward trend in the field in a number of countries. Continued cooperation in this area will not only prevent hundreds of thousand fatalities on the roads but also contribute to global and sustainable social and economic progress.

Ensuring road safety is an important aspect in the effective implementation of international development goals, including those in the field of sustainable transport. We hope that universal access to safe, affordable and environmentally sound transport will be recognized as one of the priorities of the post-2015 global development agenda. Such a goal may imply the development of sustainable transport systems, leading, in particular, to better access to transport services, the stabilization and further reduction of the projected fatality rate due to road traffic accidents worldwide, as well as a massive reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

We also support the Secretary General's endeavours to strengthen United Nations system coordination on sustainable transport. We assume that those efforts will take into account and prioritize road safety.

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For its part, the Russian Federation reaffirms its commitment to joint international efforts to fight mortality and injuries on the roads. Today, my country is undertaking a series of activities within its federal target programme for road safety until 2020, including measures on preventing road users' dangerous behaviour, ensuring road safety for children, raising the level of the technical condition of vehicles, developing traffic management systems for vehicles and pedestrians, and providing assistance for road victims. As a result, the decrease in transport risk has doubled.

The fifth international congress on the theme "Safety on the roads for the safety of life", organized by the Council of Federation of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, will be held in Saint Petersburg this fall. We invite delegations from all countries to participate.

It is a great honour for us to present for the General Assembly's consideration the draft resolution entitled "Improving global road safety" (A/68/L.40). The draft resolution is based on relevant General Assembly resolutions adopted in previous years. It reflects the progress achieved by the international community on road safety and aims at strengthening multilateral cooperation in all major aspects to reduce the level of injury caused by traffic accidents, which are now considered to be a serious challenge to public health and socioeconomic development in general. It is very important that the draft resolution emphasizes that a robust response to global challenges in road safety is possible through multilateral cooperation that includes private sector and non-governmental organizations.

The draft resolution highly appreciates the efforts undertaken by United Nations entities, first and foremost the World Health Organization (WHO), but also regional commissions, multilateral development banks and other international organizations. The draft resolution welcomes measures taken by Member States to join the relevant international legal instruments and introduce comprehensive national legislation on road safety, taking into account the main risk factors.

It is of paramount importance that the draft resolution calls upon Member States to tackle the problems of road safety through comprehensive approaches, which implies the introduction of efficient road safety management systems, strengthening interagency cooperation and developing public strategies on road safety in line with the Global Plan of the Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011-2020).

The draft resolution mandates WHO and the United Nations regional commissions to further support efforts in achieving the goals of the Decade, including facilitating the arrangements for the third United Nations Global Road Safety Week with a focus on improving the safety of children in traffic.

WHO is encouraged to continue monitoring progress on the implementation of the Decade for stabilization and reduction of road transport accidents. In that context, the draft resolution notes the importance of parameters and indices for a systematic assessment of progress achieved.

The Secretary-General is invited to continue efforts to promote effective international cooperation on road safety issues, including in the broader context of sustainable transport. In that regard, it encourages further efforts to strengthen coordination of the work of the United Nations system on sustainable transport. States Members of the United Nations and the international community as a whole are encouraged to take road safety into due consideration in the elaboration of the global post-2015 development agenda.

The draft resolution welcomes the Government of Brazil's offer to host the second high-level global conference in 2015 in order to monitor progress on the Decade of Action for Road Safety. We wish our Brazilian colleagues success in organizing that important forum.

The draft resolution was discussed in detail during intergovernmental consultations, with the full participation of all parties concerned. We note with deep satisfaction that the negotiations were held in a constructive atmosphere of openness and transparency, which allowed us to reach consensus.

We express our sincere gratitude to all delegations that participated in the negotiation of the draft resolution. In particular, we would like to thank our colleagues from WHO and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe for their significant contribution to our work.

We call upon all delegations to support the draft resolution and invite Member States to become sponsors of it.

Ms. Yeoh (Malaysia): I am honoured to stand before the Assembly representing Malaysia. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Russian Federation for leading the discussions that led to a concrete draft resolution on improving global road safety (A/68/L.40).

We are fast approaching the midway point of the Decade of Action for Road Safety. This is the right time to make a calculated assessment. Undoubtedly, there have been many successes and advances. Many nations shared their practices on efforts to reduce road casualties. The Decade of Action has raised the profile of road safety, motivated more countries to establish strategic plans or lead agencies and encouraged important new initiatives.

Malaysia wishes to reaffirm its continuous commitment to the Decade of Action for Road Safety and efforts to reduce road traffic injuries. We are continuously increasing and intensifying our road safety initiatives and programmes towards that end, resulting in the reduction of the fatality index per 10,000 registered vehicles from 3.55 to 2.9 for the period from 2009 to 2013.

In May 2013, Malaysia celebrated United Nations Global Road Safety Week, during which various pedestrian-themed road safety programmes were organized nationwide. That included the adoption of pedestrian facilities by the road safety department, mural-drawing competitions in schools, the repainting of faded zebra crossings and advocacy programmes.

Malaysia successfully introduced road safety education in all primary schools beginning in 2007 and has included a road safety awareness campaign in its national service training programme in an effort to educate and create awareness among the younger generation on the importance of road safety. Malaysia has also embarked on weekly advocacy programmes that target high-risk road users, particularly motorcyclists, and pedestrians in order to increase the knowledge and awareness of current road users. That effort is complemented by advocacy through various media, namely, television, radio, print and social media.

Realizing the value of community involvement, Malaysia has also launched road safety community-based programmes. With the theme "By the community, for the community", every state in Malaysia will be working with a specific district to provide guidance and support to that community's road safety initiatives.

Through cooperation between the Malaysian Institute of Road Safety Research and the global new car assessment programme, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations new car assessment programme completed two phases of testing involving 25 popular models in the region's market in 2013.

As road safety is everyone's responsibility, the Government actively cooperates with the private sector, non-governmental organizations and the public at large to participate in and contribute to road safety initiatives. Recognizing the significance of public engagement, Malaysia continuously listens to and requests feedback from those groups before formulating new road safety policies.

We must — and can — do much more. Safe mobility should be something we should all expect, irrespective of whether we are rich or poor or from the North or South. We should all have safe access to our streets, just as to clean water or education. That should be true for all, but especially so for our children.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child clearly and specifically states that children should have the right to a clean and safe environment. The Convention has been in force for more than 21 years, which is time enough for a child to be born and reach maturity under its protection.

But in many countries children's rights still do not extend to the journey to and from school or the street outside their homes, where kids play. Through this draft resolution, the Assembly will approve a United Nations Global Road Safety Week for 2015, to focus on the needs and rights of children on our streets and roads. Next year, hundreds of organizations and hundreds of thousands of people will campaign to make roads safer for our children.

We need to prioritize safe speeds on our streets to protect all road users, especially children, to encourage a healthy lifestyle and allow people to walk and cycle in safety and in comfort. We need to do more to support the concept of the safe school and make school communities an empowering hub for local action on safe and sustainable transport. We need to accord this agenda the priority it deserves and embed it in national programmes. In that respect, a road safety target must be included in the new post-2015 sustainable development goals.

In my role as Global Ambassador for the Make Roads Safe campaign, I have met many families who have suffered the loss of a child or a parent in a road crash. When one visits homes and hospitals and see first-hand the impact of those tragedies and the way they engulf people in grief and despair, one cannot step away and not do anything. There has not been a voice for road traffic victims.

That is changing. In support of the Decade of Action, the global Make Roads Safe campaign, under the leadership of Mr. Robertson and coordinated by the United Nations Global Road Safety Collaboration; the excellent work being done across the world by the auto clubs of the Fédération internationale de l'automobile, which is led by its President, Jean Todt; and the relevant United Nations resolutions are giving voices to the demand for action.

In my visits to many countries, along with sadness and loss, I have also seen the many ways in which solutions are being implemented and lives protected: helmet enforcement in Viet Nam; new bicycle lanes in Costa Rica; a new road safety strategy in Cambodia; pilot projects for safer school routes in South Africa; the big reductions in deaths and injuries that are being achieved in Russia; and, in my own country, road design solutions and car crash test programmes, which demonstrate Malaysia's commitment to road safety.

It is wonderful that Brazil is offering to host the next Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety, which will allow Brazil to look into ways to ensure safer roads. In the months leading up to the Ministerial Conference, we must be ambitious with our expectations.

Road safety needs a stronger voice at the United Nations. We need new sources of funding to support road safety campaign, and we need new momentum in support of our shared objective for the Decade of Action, beginning with the inclusion of road safety in the post-2015 goals. Let us all recommit to that challenge and work together to make our roads safe.

Lord Robertson (United Kingdom): It is a great honour to represent the United Kingdom in today's meeting, and I would like to thank the United Kingdom Government for giving me this opportunity.

I am the Chairman of the Commission for Global Road Safety. As a former United Kingdom Defence Secretary and Secretary General of NATO, I feel I speak with some authority when I describe the carnage on the world's roads as resembling nothing less than a war.

Since I last spoke in the General Assembly six years ago (see A/62/PV.87), a great deal of progress has been made in uniting the world to combat road safety deaths and injuries. Building on the early leadership of the Sultanate of Oman, the Russian Federation hosted the first Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety in Moscow. The Decade of Action for Road Safety was proclaimed and a Global Plan for the Decade was agreed. I would like to pay tribute to all of those involved in driving that process forward.

Since the launch of the Decade of Action for Road Safety, in May 2011, many countries have been inspired to redouble their efforts to prevent road traffic injuries. New national strategies have been launched in a number of countries, and Bloomberg Philanthropies estimates that more than 1.5 billion people are now being protected by new traffic safety laws in the countries where it works. With the support of the FIA Foundation for the Automobile and Society, independent vehicle crash test programmes have been established in Latin America and in south-east Asia to encourage consumers to demand safe cars. And safety assessment is now being used to influence road design in some World Bank supported projects.

Yet I have to say that we have not come as far as some of us had hoped, or indeed expected. In 2010, when the General Assembly established the Decade of Action, more than 100 countries endorsed the objective of stabilizing and then reducing road deaths by 2020. But we have not yet seen the levels of international cooperation or political leadership or resourcing that are necessary if we are going to achieve that. I therefore congratulate Brazil for offering to host the mid-decade review Ministerial Conference. That will be an important opportunity to renew commitment to the Decade of Action; to forge new partnerships between countries, within regions and with corporate and philanthropic donors; and to generate momentum for real advances in the second half of the Decade of Action.

The latest global status report from the World Health Organization shows a stark divide between high-income countries, where road casualty numbers are falling, and the rest of the world. Cooperation between nations that have developed expertise and road safety and those that need assistance should therefore be a priority. The need to find ways to cooperate was a subject raised by President Rousseff of Brazil when the United Kingdom's Prime Minister David Cameron visited the country the year before last, and it is clearly important to many Group of Twenty nations that are experiencing rapid motorization.

Improving road safety can seem an immense task, but by focusing on the main building blocks — which are data management, the way roads are designed and used, vehicle standards and new technologies, seat

belt and helmet enforcement and, above all, speed management — countries can drive down the number of deaths and injuries. That has been the experience of the United Kingdom over many decades. The United Kingdom has been fortunate in being able to develop policies through a sustained focus on road safety, and that has led to us being among the world leaders in road safety with one of the lowest casualty rates.

This year in the United Kingdom we are celebrating 30 years of drink-drive campaign activity, which is estimated to have saved around 2,000 lives. That has shown the positive impact that communications can have when done effectively — for instance, by tackling attitudes towards drinking and driving, social acceptability and denial.

Alongside that, we have taken a pioneering role in developing the European New Car Assessment Programme and have also developed our safety helmet rating system, which helps to inform motorcyclists about how well a helmet will protect them from a head injury. That system is unique to the United Kingdom and was recently awarded a Prince Michael International Road Safety Award.

The United Kingdom continues to take a tough approach to enforcing road safety law. However, for some minor offences we have recently made remedial training courses available, which are aimed at changing driver behaviour.

Internationally, too, the United Kingdom is supporting road safety. The Department for International Development provides £1.5 million to the Global Road Safety Facility, which is housed at the World Bank. As a Board member of the Global Road Safety Facility, the United Kingdom has pushed for the mainstreaming of road safety across the World Bank and for increased engagement with other multilateral development banks. The World Bank's Transport Sector Board recently agreed that no road project shall be approved by the Board without a comprehensive consideration of the road safety context in the borrowing country.

In addition, the Department for International Development works directly to improve road safety in partner countries. For example, in Nepal, where almost half a million people suffered road injuries in 2010, the Department is improving safety conditions on highly vulnerable mountain roads and ensuring their sustainability by working with the Government to strengthen the capacity for implementing road safety measures. Through the African Community Access Programme, the Department for International Development undertakes applied research to improve road safety. In Tanzania, for example, its programmes have assessed the effectiveness of different road safety measures to increase safety for children and adults.

Last week, the World Bank and the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation published an important new analysis of the global burden of disease caused by motorized transport. That report calculates — and it is really quite remarkable — that the combined deaths from road injury and motor-vehicle related air polution amount to 1.5 million people per year, which is a greater casualty rate than AIDS or malaria. But unlike those terrible diseases, the global trajectory of vehicle-related deaths is upwards. That data reinforces the Commission for Global Road Safety's view that a focus on road safety can also play a vital role in improving the urban environment and tackling some of the conditions, such as poor air quality and lack of exercise, that are responsible for the rapid increase in noncommunicable diseases.

I am grateful to the General Assembly for taking note in this draft resolution (A/68/L.40) of the Commission for Global Road Safety's latest report, *Safe Roads for All: A Post-2015 Agenda for Health and Development*. It is a report with a simple but compelling argument at its core: road traffic deaths and injuries are a plague on the young people of this planet, human suffering is preventable, and we have a powerful model and economic case for taking action.

By the end of this year, the mid-way point of the Decade of Action, we need to see a renewed political and financial commitment to road safety. As part of the open working group meetings last week, the United Kingdom, represented in a troika made up of Australia and the Netherlands, noted the importance of increasing access to safe, sustainable transport, within the cluster discussion on economic growth, industrialization infrastructure and energy.

As Prime Minister Cameron has said, every six seconds somebody is killed or seriously injured on the world's roads. Addressing that must be an urgent priority for the international community. I pay tribute to Michelle Yeoh as the Global Road Safety Ambassador, who spoke before me in this debate. She has brought her talents and her communication skills to bringing this message to a wider audience. But we must all redouble our efforts to secure urgent action for road safety.

The challenge we face, which we have not yet met, is how to transfer the words and good intentions contained in this draft resolution and previous United Nations resolutions into real and practical cooperation and action on our streets and highways. We must do so to fulfil the promise of the Decade of Action and, in doing so, lay the foundations for safer and more sustainable mobility for all.

Mr. Al-Hajri (Oman) (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the Government of the Sultanate of Oman, I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to His Excellency the Secretary-General for his report (A/68/368) on efforts to improve road safety around the world. In it, he reviews the most recent developments in the implementation of recommendations contained in General Assembly resolutions on improving road safety around the world. Moreover, I would like to commend the constructive efforts by the international community in the field of traffic and road safety.

We are proud that our country pioneered launching the global Make Roads Safe Campaign, which we introduced in the General Assembly by promoting the inclusion of an item on road safety in the agenda, in the service of generations to come. The Assembly included such an item in its agenda for the first time at its fifty-seventh session. At the plenary meeting held on 22 May 2003 (see A/57/PV.86), the Assembly adopted a resolution (resolution 57/309) that the Sultanate of Oman introduced based on our firm belief in the importance of achieving road safety at the international level.

The international community is shedding light on such tragic incidents in order to raise awareness of the need to improve road safety. The General Assembly has adopted a number of resolutions on global road safety, and a number of meetings have been held at the ministerial level to raise awareness on the tragedy of traffic casualties and on the need to build safer roads and provide technical safety assistance at the regional and global levels.

As evidenced by the fact that road safety has become an important item on the agenda of the United Nations and those of other international organizations, the international community attaches great importance to cooperation with all the relevant parties to put an end to this harmful phenomenon. According to United Nations statistics, approximately 1.2 million people die each year as a result of traffic accidents, in addition to the millions injured or disabled. That takes a heavy social, economic, financial and human toll on the international community.

The Sultanate of Oman is making great efforts to improve road safety. For example, the Sultanate has issued a decree establishing a national committee on road safety to set out a single, comprehensive strategy to reduce traffic and road accidents and to develop standards that meet international criteria. With regard to awareness-raising efforts, we periodically review traffic statistics and, each year, publish approximately 1 million leaflets that are distributed throughout every governorate in the Sultanate and that target road users, schoolchildren and every sector of society. We have also produced internationally award-winning awareness-raising films. In order to raise awareness about road safety among future generations, we have established a traffic school for children that includes a model of an ideal integrated city. Moreover, the police force of the Sultanate of Oman, in cooperation with the relevant Government authorities, has been planning and following up on the implementation of road safety measures. It periodically updates the road design manual to bring it in line with the specifications of local and international safety standards. In addition, we have established a website for the public traffic authority to provide comprehensive information on road safety and answers to people's questions.

In conclusion, we would like to express our appreciation and gratitude to the Russian Federation for introducing the draft resolution entitled "Improving road safety around the world". In order to improve international efforts in this respect, and based on our desire to work together to achieve the common goal of safeguarding human rights and increasing international cooperation on road safety, we call on the General Assembly to adopt the draft resolution by consensus.

Mr. Mamabolo (South Africa): My delegation welcomes this important debate to consider the draft resolution entitled "Improving global road safety" (A/68/L.40). We support its adoption and we trust that the world, in particular developing countries, will continue to witness safety improvements to our roads.

Indeed, the issue of road safety is an imperative improvement in our countries, as millions of our people suffer grave injuries — and many lose their lives — due to road accident injuries in our communities. We concur with the view that road accident injuries are a major

public health and development problem with a broad range of social and economic consequences that put considerable strain on our national systems.

For that reason, it is critically important that, in pursuit of sustainable development, our Governments continue to invest in climate-resilient road infrastructure that is capable of withstanding the unusual weather patterns of our times and of meeting the needs of our growing national populations. It is also critically important that we give expression to the draft resolution by strengthening our policy framework at the national level.

In 1996, South Africa adopted the National Road Traffic Act, which regulates road usage and promotes road safety. The act also empowers traffic officers to stop motorists on the roads, examine their cars, verify the validity of their driving licences and issue fines where necessary. In line with our policies of non-discrimination, I should mention that road traffic laws in South Africa are enforced without discrimination and apply to all road users, based on the principles of equality and non-discrimination.

In addition, in 1997, our national Department of Transport launched the Arrive Alive road-safety campaign as a short-term initiative aimed at reducing carnage on the roads. The campaign has played a significant role in bringing about positive change in road users' attitudes. Through it, the Government of South Africa has managed to drastically reduce the number of deaths from accidents and has sharpened the readiness and rapid response of our law enforcement agencies and health service, particularly during peak traffic periods on the national calendar. Thanks to its success, Arrive Alive has now become a continuing, year-round campaign that is ramped up during peak holiday periods.

In 2006, in another demonstration of its commitment to road safety, South Africa's Government designated October as Transport Month. Now an annual project, Transport Month is used to assess the country's progress in providing reliable and safe roads and modes of transport to all road users in the country. During the month, the Government assesses transport infrastructure and establishes ways by which the public transport system and roads can be improved. The Department of Transport will soon finalize a long-term national master plan designed to improve the role of transport in fostering social and economic development by rolling out infrastructure and services that respond to the needs of South African road users.

In August 2013, the Department of Transport also launched the Zenani Mandela Road Safety Scholarship Certificate Award and Road Safety Initiative. The scholarship is an initiative of the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile Foundation, based in the United Kingdom and working with the United Nations in collaboration with South Africa's Department of Transport and the Nelson Mandela Centre of Memory. Its purpose is to offer young South Africans an opportunity to learn with and from talented professionals from around the world, with a shared aim of improving road safety for communities in their home countries.

The Zenani Mandela Scholarship is also designed to inspire young leaders in South Africa to join the global movement advocated by the United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011-2020), which was introduced with the aim of reducing and stabilizing road deaths by 50 per cent by the year 2020 and beyond. We call for global support for that initiative.

At the global level, South Africa is a State party to a number of international conventions related to transport and road safety. I must add that South Africa is party to the United Nations Decade of Action, which aims at raising awareness and supporting international measures to reduce the effects of poor road safety by focusing on the Decade's five road-safety pillars, alongside with the revitalization of the Arrive Alive safety campaign.

In that connection, South Africa has developed its own strategy for the Decade of Action that aims at improving education and enforcement to address poor road-use behaviour, in line with international best practices.

Let us continue to work together to support the implementation of the objectives of the Decade of Action for Road Safety.

Mr. Rodríguez Laguens (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would first like to thank the President for convening this important debate on road safety around the world.

Argentina is an adherent of the Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011-2020), declared by the United Nations in 2010 and aimed at stabilizing and, ultimately, reducing the figures on road-accident casualties

worldwide by increasing activities at the national, regional and global levels.

In 2008, Argentina's President, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, sent a bill to the national Congress that enjoyed political and multisectoral consensus, based on which a law creating a national road safety agency, and making road safety a State policy, was enacted under the aegis of the Ministry of the Interior and Transportation. The law provides for the agency's establishment and for a budget allowing it to function interjurisdictionally within our federal system. Since its inception we have implemented a national road-safety education plan that reaches public and private schools at every level throughout the country; the institution of uniform standards for granting national driving licences; a national speed control plan using technology on all national highways; a plan regulating drinking and driving; a seat-belt and motorcycle helmet plan and a national road safety observatory for providing statistics certified by the International Transport Forum. In the past five years we have achieved concrete results that are reflected in the report of the World Health Organization. We have reduced the rate of traffic casualties per 100,000 inhabitants by 14 per cent, and the rate of traffic casualties per 10,000 vehicles by 50 per cent in the same period, representing 5,900 lives saved, which almost equals the number of traffic victims we have in any given year.

We speak of victims, and we should note that all the policies applied at the national level were developed together with civil society organizations, which are an integral part of our national road safety agency, a fact that is particularly true for the families and friends of victims of road accidents, whom I would like to acknowledge here. They are our guiding light on this path, and they are always with us.

The policies I have mentioned and their results have been recognized at international level, in particular during the recent meeting of the United Nations Road Safety Collaboration in support of the Global Plan for the Decade of Action of Road Safety. Argentine Minister of the Interior and Transport Florencio Randazzo received an award in recognition of the relationships he has created and the work he has accomplished with civil society as part of the Global Road Safety Facility, among other honours. Furthermore, we should mention that the work done by Minister Randazzo have been recognized by the International Automobile Federation, the World Bank and other organizations, such as the World Health Organization.

The Argentine Republic supports the draft resolution now under consideration by the General Assembly and has co-sponsored it (A/68/L.40). Some of the key elements of the draft resolution deserve greater emphasis — for example, the need for national Governments to promote concrete action on road safety in the short term and the suggestion that leading organizations be established in each country. Endowing them with appropriate budgets and institutional operations and involving all sectors of society is a vital necessity today.

We cannot wait any longer to show concrete determination in the field. We must begin the work to establish specific goals and effective, comparable indicators, such as number of victims per 100,000 inhabitants, the number of victims per 10,000 vehicles. We must also observe certain indicators, such as helmet use, seat belt use, average speed studies and the prevalence of alcohol and drug use, and create baselines for each country. For that, we count on the support of World Health Organization.

Furthermore, it is very important to promote regional initiatives such as the Ibero-American Road Safety Observatory (OISEVI), which brings together road safety authorities of the countries of Ibero-America, especially Latin America. In addition, we know that, with the support of the United Nations, the measures adopted under that initiative can be implemented in other regions. OISEVI's technical cooperation function was mentioned by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in his latest report entitled "Improving global road safety" (A/68/368).

The Observatory has as its central objective the coordination of strategic actions in the framework of the Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011-2020). In that regard, we believe that driver education, the collecction of statistics, the establishment control plans and dealing with the greatest problem of our region — motorcycles — are priorities that we should focus on in our efforts in the short term.

In Argentina, we have made real progress, but we are aware that there is still a long way to go. As noted by the Global Ambassador for the Make Roads Safe campaign, Michelle Yeoh — and this is the slogan of the Decade, one which our Minister of the Interior

and Transport has adopted — "Together we can save millions of lives."

Mr. Jawha (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of my delegation, at the outset, I would like to extend our thanks to the delegation of the Russian Federation for its successful efforts and leadership during the informal negotiations on the draft resolution on improving global road safety (A/68/L.40). The draft resolution deals with one of the most important issues on the agenda of the United Nations and of the world at large, namely, the safety of people.

My delegation took part in the informal consultations on the draft resolution and, as in past years, became one of its sponsors. We believe that it is an important draft resolution with regard to the launch of to the Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011-2020), which we welcomed. The draft resolution encourages cooperation among Member States and United Nations agencies, the private sector and non-governmental organizations in efforts aimed at achieving the highest possible degree of road safety. In that regard, we would like to emphasized the importance of taking this important issue into account in all upcoming development programmes of the United Nations. We would also like to stress that a sustainable transport sector and improved road safety require a commitment by developed countries to help developing countries, especially those facing exceptional circumstances, through capacity-building, funding and technology transfer, and without delay.

My Government strongly supports all efforts to ensure road safety around the world. We have acceded to the relevant United Nations conventions on oad transport and road signs. It Government also pays great attention to the issue of safety on highways and its impact on human lives and development. The Government has also established a high-level committee under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister and with the participation of a number of Government entities as well as civil society organizations, in order to develop a national strategy for road safety. The council of the public authority for road safety in Syria leads the efforts aimed at maintaining the technical conditions of all roads according to global specifications, and securing traffic safety. It also promotes efforts at data collection on traffic safety and administrative systems and raises awareness about traffic satefy rules in cooperation with the relevant actors and civil society organizations.

Despite all the ongoing efforts by the Syrian Government to improve traffic safety, we have experienced a number of difficulties that impede those efforts, including the ongoing imposition by some countries and regional entities of illegal unilateral coercive economic measures against the people and Government of my country. Unfortunately, those measures target vital sectors, including transport, energy, power, finance and trade, with negative impacts on the efforts of both the public and private sectors in all development spheres, especially the plans for building strong infrastructure, including roads, as well as the improvement of the specifications for roads, taking into account safety standards.

Armed terrorist groups that are being trained, financed and equipped by foreign States are indiscriminately targeting civilian passengers and trade and transit convoys. They also plant mines and roadside bombs that claim the lives of thousands of passengers, including children, and causeda great number of physical disabilities. They have also led to fear and horror among Syrians when they travel on roads, after they had enjoyed safety and security on highways for decades. On top of that, this catastrophic terror has had a significant impact on the Syrian economy hampers the significant role of the road networks, economically and commercially, as the primary means for trade movement inside Syria and across the borders.

Finally, we would like to affirm the importance of genuine political will by all Member States to provide assistance to the Syrian Government to deal with those two major problems, and ensure the success of the government development plans, including those that aim at improving road safety.

Mr. Botto (Monaco) (*spoke in French*): My delegation thanks the Secretary-General for his report on improving global road safety (A/68/368). The report reminds us of the bleak picture for 2010, when road accidents caused more than 1 million deaths. Resolution 66/260, co-sponsored by Monaco and adopted on 19 April 2012, called on Member States to carry out activities to promote road safety in the five areas of the Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011-2020). In most accidents, it is the behaviour of the driver that is to blame — excessive speed, failure to control the vehicle, blood alcohol level and failure to comply with the basic rules of the road.

That global finding is well known. It is especially urgent to strengthen the prevention of accidents and the protection of road users, in particular the most vulnerable, such as motorcyclists and pedestrians. In 2011, there were 232 injuries and 2 deaths in the Principality of Monaco alone. Declared a national priority two years ago by Prince Albert II, road safety is clearly being improved. In 2012 and 2013, there were no deaths, and the number of accidents is on a downward trend. However, two thirds of the accidents in 2013 still involved two-wheeled vehicles. The Principality's Government has therefore launched several awareness-raising campaigns for drivers, namely, in the media, on the one hand, and by putting up new road signs, on the other hand. In addition, city planning efforts include such things as speed warning cameras to remind drivers of speed limits on the most dangerous road strips. Furthermore, on the legal front, Monaco's criminal code imposes a fine or a prison sentence on anyone driving a vehicle who is clearly drunk or under the influence of alcohol.

Finally, educating children and young people is a key aspect of Monaco's road safety policy. There are theory and practical awareness-raising classes from primary-school age to raise awareness so that children follow the basic highway and road signalling code. Mandatory lessons for school children aged 12 and optional training for those aged 14 lead to a school certificate in road safety. Furthermore, riding a moped requires a special driver's licence, obtainable from the age of 14 years, which is also valid abroad. Monaco was one of the first countries to require the completion of a test for provisional drivers in that category.

Ms. Power (United States of America): The United States is pleased to co-sponsor and urge the adoption of this comprehensive draft resolution on road safety (A/68/L.40). We sponsored the draft resolution because motor vehicle accidents kill more than 1.2 million people every year and because many of those deaths could be prevented through improvements in road design, traffic management, safety equipment and emergency response.

Most important, however, is driver behaviour. Excessive speed and a failure to obey traffic rules are both killers. The role of alcohol in traffic fatalities is also well documented and should never be understated. In recent years, however, we have faced a new and deadly threat in the form of driving while texting or talking on the phone. Research shows that cell phone users are more than five times more likely than undistracted drivers to be involved in an accident and that texting while driving can delay a driver's reactions as much as a 0.08 blood-alcohol level, which is the same level as for a drunk driver. In the United States, more teenagers are already killed while texting than because they have been drinking. However, the problem is not confined either to teenagers or to highly industrialized countries. It is spreading as fast as technology.

Worldwide, six out of seven people have access to cell phones and more than 1 billion cars are on the road. In crowded conditions, with narrow roads and poor infrastructure, bicyclists and pedestrians are particularly at risk. Too many drivers simply do not understand the danger of taking their eyes, even briefly, off the road. While drinking is episodic, the use of hand-held devices is chronic. No one should die or kill because of a text message.

That is a lesson that we are starting to learn. Earlier this week, the state of Maryland, here in the United States, enacted stricter penalties for drivers who cause an accident while texting or talking on a cell phone. The new law was named after Jake Owen, a five-year-old who never turned six because, three years ago, a distracted driver ploughed into his family's car. In 2010, the Secretary-General prohibited United Nations employees from texting while behind the wheel. President Obama adopted a comparable standard for United States employees. Globally, more than 70 countries have approved laws that restrict drivers using hand-held devices. We must build on that momentum and ensure that such laws are enforced.

A motor vehicle is a source of transportation but is also a potential weapon. Compared to other drivers, a distracted driver is at least four times as likely to be involved in a crash. When a driver is texting, the likelihood of an accident rises by a factor of 20. That is pure recklessness and must be stopped.

Two years ago, 18-year-old Taylor Sauer was heading home after dropping a friend off at college. Texting constantly, she was travelling at 88 miles an hour when she ran her car into a semi-trailer. Immediately prior to her death, she sent the following message to a friend: "I can't discuss this matter now. Driving and Facebooking is not safe. Ha ha."

Traffic safety in all its dimensions is a deadly serious business. There are many lessons to be learned about how to minimize the danger. The challenge for us

all and the imperative embodied in the draft resolution that we consider today are to be sure that those lessons are learned before, and not after, it is too late.

Mr. Patriota (Brazil): I thank the Acting President for presiding over these discussions on the very important issue of road safety. We need to raise awareness in the United Nations of the fact that road and transit accidents are a leading cause of death in many very populous countries, including my own. Day after day, thousands of people are killed and maimed in streets and roads around the globe.

We congratulate the Russian Federation on its leadership and successful facilitation of the negotiations on draft resolution A/68/L.40, entitled "Improving global road safety", which is before the General Assembly today. Brazil joins as a sponsor of the draft resolution and is glad to offer its full support for this important agenda item as host country to the next high-level conference on global road safety in 2015. We take up that commitment with honour and responsibility. We know that addressing the issue at the international, national and local levels will help to save lives, improve health and promote development, as mentioned by President Dilma Rousseff during her address at the opening of the general debate of the current session of the General Assembly (see A/68/PV.5).

I take this opportunity also to acknowledge the presence of Brazilian congressman Hugo Leal, who presides over the parliamentarian front in defence of road safety and who drafted the national law to impose limits on the consumption of alcohol by vehicle drivers through more rigorous enforcement of, and an increase in, criminal penalties.

The current level of traffic accidents in today's world is unacceptably high and points to alarming scenarios in the near future. Mortality and serious injuries caused by road accidents have become one of the most pressing public health problems facing the international community today, since the fatality rate associated with the road system is considerably higher than the fatality rate associated with other systems of transportation. According to reports by the World Health Organization (WHO), road traffic accidents claim the lives of 1.3 million victims and injure 20 to 50 million people every year. If we do not change the course of events, road traffic fatalities will reach 2.3 million and become the sixth leading cause of death by 2020. Decreasing the mortality rate of road traffic accidents is a global challenge that affects developed and developing countries alike. If there is one goal that could be easily typified as universal, this is it, and it is no coincidence that it was recognized as an area of priority in the document compiled by the co-facilitators of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals.

In March 2010, the United Nations proclaimed the period 2011-2020 as the Decade of Action for Road Safety and called upon Member States to stabilize, and then reduce, the forecast level of road traffic fatalities by increasing activities at the national, regional and global levels. The initiative has generated greater awareness on the importance of enhancing transport infrastructure, adopting preventive measures, penalties and other road safety norms and providing adequate emergency care for people injured in road traffic accidents — and not only adults, but more significantly, children, who tend to be disproportionately affected, whether directly or indirectly, due to the loss of parents or caregivers.

Despite noticeable signs of progress, day-to-day reality still draws to our attention the fact that more needs to be done. Currently, around 27 per cent of deaths and injuries in traffic accidents involve pedestrians and cyclists. But that number rises to over 75 per cent in developing countries. Pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists constitute a major vulnerable group, and they deserve adequate attention in public policies aimed at preventing traffic accidents.

Human life is invaluable and its loss irreparable. The pain it inflicts on families is unbearable and should lead us to take firm action at all levels. Road traffic injuries place a heavy burden on society. According to the Institute for Applied Economic Research, a Brazilian economic institute, costs arising from traffic accidents on federal, state and municipal roads were estimated at approximately $8 billion in 2005. Previous estimates in 2003 revealed costs of approximately $2 billion. In 2012, traffic-related accidents in Brazil resulted in more 150 million hospital admissions in public institutions, at a cost of $90 million. Admissions involving motorcyclists represented 80,000 cases, amounting to $45 million in health-care costs. A renewed national plan was adopted in 2011, under which emergency relief can now be sent more promptly to disaster-affected sites through a network of mobile units at maximal alert levels.

We believe that improving road safety requires multidisciplinary action and efforts to address major risk factors such as the non-use of safety belts and

child restraints, the non-use of helmets, driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs, inappropriate and excessive speed and texting and inappropriate use of cell phones while driving, as highlighted in the draft resolution we are considering today. Adopting and enforcing legislation that addresses those most common risk factors has been a priority for Brazilian authorities. The best examples to that effect have been the establishment, since June 2008, of a zero-tolerance policy on blood alcohol concentration levels for vehicle drivers and the mandatory use of anti-lock braking systems and airbags in new vehicles as of January 2014. Yet another example is the mobilization through the National Pact for the Reduction of Accidents, which was established in 2011 by the Ministry of Cities and the Ministry of Health and further strengthened by President Dilma Rousseff in September 2012 through partnerships with civil society.

Brazil is deeply engaged in a number of international initiatives to enhance cooperation on road safety in line with the United Nations Global Road Safety Collaboration, set up by WHO. We are also convinced that the Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011-2020) provides the ideal framework for international cooperation and much-needed support to the development of national plans, possibly and hopefully within the broader framework of a post-2015 development agenda.

Finally, we thank all members for welcoming the offer made by the Brazilian Government to host the next Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety in 2015, most probably at the end of November or beginning of December. The proceedings for the establishment of a preparatory committee will be announced in a timely manner, and we expect to count on the active support of partners and organizations in this endeavour so that next year's Conference can contribute to the overall goal of improving road safety through greater international cooperation.

Mr. Rattray (Jamaica): Jamaica thanks the Secretary-General for transmitting the report by the World Health Organization (A/68/368) on improving global road safety. We note the very comprehensive account of the range of activities and programmes undertaken around the world in furtherance of the goals and objectives of the Decade of Action for Road Safety.

Jamaica is indeed pleased that its own activities and programmes reflect the global trends and is happy to sponsor the draft resolution (A/68/L.40). It is noteworthy that there is broad recognition of the need to pay greater attention to global road safety as a means of promoting national development and indeed global development.

Jamaica concurs that more needs to be done to address road safety holistically, including through better implementation and enforcement of laws and regulations on safe road use, improving vehicle safety standards, increasing road user awareness, addressing the five risk factors and investing in post-crash treatment and services.

Our experience has taught us the critical importance of employing multisectoral collaboration in addressing the epidemic of road traffic injuries and deaths. That has resulted in greater efforts and awareness of the need to strengthen capacity and put in place coordinated policies and programmes that involve all stakeholders, with the aim of improving road safety in the country. In 2013, Jamaica was honoured to be the recipient of the prestigious Prince Michael International Road Safety Award in recognition of its success in reducing the number of fatalities on the country's roads. The National Road Safety Council was recognized as a best practice example of a highly effective lead agency on road safety.

Road traffic injuries are already the number one killer of young people aged 15 to 29 worldwide. Despite recent improvements, we run the risk of reversing gains in reducing fatalities. Having reduced annual fatalities from 434 in 1993 to 260 in 2012, Jamaica achieved its target of below 300 fatalities, which was established in 2008. The target was then revised downwards to below 240, to be achieved over a three-year period ending in 2015. However, in 2013 those figures rose to 308. In addition, for the first quarter of 2014, we have seen a 25 per cent increase in fatalities compared with the first quarter of 2013.

We cannot afford to let this epidemic get any worse. Sustained action and attention are required at the national, regional and global levels to accelerate progress towards achieving the target of reducing the projected level of road fatalities by 50 per cent by 2020 and to prevent fatalities from road crashes from becoming the number one cause of preventable death. Road safety still needs to become more of an international priority. Global funding and support are still inadequate to achieve the objectives of the Decade of Action to save 5 million lives and to prevent 50 million serious injuries by 2020. In that regard, we welcome the

offer of the Government of Brazil to host to the second global high-level conference on road safety in 2015 in order to review progress in implementing the Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety.

The rising toll of road deaths places a heavy burden on developing countries such as Jamaica. Health-care costs and the impact on lost productivity are only the most glaring examples. We should also bear in mind the untold cost and suffering borne by victims and their families, the resulting disabilities and the negative impact on the enjoyment of development rights. Those serve only to reiterate why attention to improving global road safety requires that such a goal be properly reflected in the post-2015 development agenda.

As we look towards the new global development agenda, we must ensure that transportation is both safe and sustainable. As such, Jamaica is supportive of efforts to address that objective with a simple target in the context of the new development goals. We reaffirm the call made by our Prime Minister in endorsing "The Long Short Walk" campaign in September 2013 for combating road traffic injury to be included among the post-2015 sustainable development goals in the context of safe and sustainable transport.

Ms. Gunnarsdóttir (Iceland): Road safety is important for all States alike. Iceland is pleased to have co-sponsored again this year draft resolution A/68/L.40, which is before us. We are now in the fourth year of the Decade of Action for Road Safety. We have set ambitious goals to improve road safety, thereby preventing serious life-altering injuries and the loss of lives, aside from the economic costs involved with regard to traffic accidents.

I am pleased to note that prevention and safety efforts in Iceland have resulted in a significant decrease in road traffic fatalities and injuries. A national road safety plan has been in place since 2005 and the progress is evident. The most effective measures to date include legislative action targeted at young drivers, a special emphasis on enforcing speed limits, road risk mapping and targeted prevention campaigns, including against the use of mobile phones while driving. On the basis of the Decade of Action, further areas for improvement have been identified for possible inclusion in the national plan.

While Iceland has managed to decrease the actual number of fatalities, progress at the international level has been in proportional terms. Fatalities have remained the same even as the number of vehicles has increased by 15 per cent from 2007 to 2010. However, more needs to be done if we are to achieve our target.

We also need to focus on survivors of traffic accidents, who are often left with serious and long-lasting injuries. In particular, my Government is committed to raising awareness of spinal cord injuries, which are given a special mention in the draft resolution before us. Traffic accidents cause almost half of all spinal cord injuries. It is estimated that between 4 and 5 million people around the world now live with spinal cord injuries, most of whom are between the ages of 20 and 40.

The Government of Iceland has supported the Institute of Spinal Cord Injury in Iceland in its work towards alleviating the suffering of those living with a spinal cord injury. The Institute aims to raise awareness and to collect information on innovative treatments for such injuries. That initiative has received support from the Nordic Council, which has agreed to organize a joint project to search for an effective remedy for spinal cord injuries.

We encourage Member States, as a part of their national efforts, to take similar steps to increase knowledge of the serious injuries caused by traffic accidents and to try to find ways to more effectively treat or even cure them. In addition, we stand ready to share our knowledge with all those who are interested through our national Road Safety Directorate and the Institute of Spinal Cord Injury in Iceland.

Finally, we would like to thank Oman for originally placing the issue of road safety on the agenda of the United Nations, and the Russian Federation for continuing to promote our collective efforts to ensure the safety and needs of all road users. We know first-hand that real results can be achieved in saving lives and in alleviating the suffering of those left with serious injuries.

Mr. Roet (Israel): The sacred Talmud tells us that whoever saves a life is considered to have saved an entire world. In the light of that, the Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety can save the universe.

I would like to thank the President for having convened this meeting on an important topic that calls for more focused attention on saving lives. I would also like to thank the World Health Organization (WHO) for its ongoing activities and support in the area of global road safety. Israel is proud to support the current draft

resolution (A/68/L.40), as it has all previous resolutions on road safety.

Fatalities as a result of road accidents remain shockingly high worldwide. People are twice as likely to be killed in a road accident as to die of malaria. Worldwide, road accidents are the leading cause of death among people of 15 to 29 years old. Vulnerable road users, namely, pedestrians, bicyclists and motorcyclists, account for more than half of all traffic fatalities. That is to say nothing of the tens of millions who suffer serious injuries each year, many resulting in long-term or permanent disabilities. That is nothing short of an epidemic.

It is therefore surprising that such an epidemic has not evoked a public outcry. Most of such deaths and injuries are predictable and preventable. Yet only 28 countries, accounting for just 7 per cent of the world's population, are protected by comprehensive traffic safety laws.

Fortunately, the international community is beginning to take action. The five pillars of the Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety provide clarity and areas of focus for national authorities acting to improve domestic road safety. It is clear that progress is being made. The recent WHO report entitled *Improving Global Road Safety* highlights the growing activities of regional organizations that aim to strengthen road safety among their members. The number and variety of regional programmes, including training workshops, indicate that regional organizations can contribute substantially to the implementation of the five pillars of the Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety.

I would like to take this opportunity to briefly mention the secondary benefits of increased road safety. It is clear that, in addition to saving lives, implementing the pillars of the Global Plan would reduce road congestion, increase productivity and lessen transport time for goods and people and reduce pollution, to name but a few positive outcomes. While of course those effects pale in comparison to the importance of saving lives and avoiding catastrophic injuries, they serve to counter the argument that Governments simply cannot afford to implement the necessary measures.

I would like to share a few of the many actions the State of Israel has undertaken to improve road safety within the country. In 2006, four years before the General Assembly proclaimed the current Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011-2020), Israel established a national road safety authority with the goal of developing and, most importantly, implementing a national plan. The authority promotes regulations and policies, prepares driver-education programmes and communicates safety-related messages to the public. It has a close working relationship with other branches of Government, including the police, as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) concerned with road safety. Chief among those is Or Yarok — Hebrew for "green light" — which sponsors research on the wide range of factors that influence road safety and puts the knowledge into practice to save lives, for example, taking its outreach directly into the homes of new drivers to promote safe driving practices. Or Yarok is a prime example of effective cooperation between the Government and NGOs.

Together, Israel's national road safety authority and its partners are working to increase road safety though a holistic approach that includes adopting high technical standards for maintaining sound infrastructure, promoting strong education programmes, maintaining a policy of robust enforcement, and other responses that track the five pillars of the Global Plan for the Decade. The ultimate goal of Israel's efforts is, of course, to save lives. Our success is evident in the numbers. Thanks to Government efforts, the number of accident atalities among young drivers fell by 60 per cent between 2006 and 2012. As a result, Israel's traffic safety record now surpasses that of other high-income countries with robust traffic laws and enforcement, and its rate of road traffic deaths is among the lowest in the world. That is, of course, not enough, and we should and will do more.

Member States can and should urgently address this global problem through education, and by establishing and enforcing effective road safety laws. It is important to remember that road traffic injuries and deaths can be reduced and prevented if Governments implement appropriate interventions. Nearly seven years of the Decade of Action remain. We have the ability to make our achievements in this area a model for collective resolve and national action. We have the ability to make a difference. We have the ability and the obligation to save the world, one person at a time.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): In accordance with resolution 49/2, of 19 October 1994, I now give the floor to the observer of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Mr. Boulanger (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies): Put in economic and sustainable development terms, road crashes kill 3,300 people — roughly the number carried by 10 aircraft — every day, or 1.3 million people every year. Nearly half of those who die on the world's roads are pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists. Road crashes also severely injure, often permanently, between 20 million and 50 million people every year. The global financial cost of road traffic injuries is $518 billion every year, equivalent to the loss of an economy the size of Switzerland's every year. It is estimated that approximately 85 per cent of annual road crash deaths occur each year in low- and middle-income countries, costing those countries between 2 and 3 per cent of their gross national product per year, or $65 billion — more than all the development aid they receive. By 2020, unless action is taken, road traffic injuries are predicted to rise overall by about 65 per cent. These economic, social and, more fundamentally, human costs to parents, young people, breadwinners, families and communities in general, are unacceptable, particularly since such tragedies are preventable.

Since 1998, when for the first time the *World Disasters Report* of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) termed road crashes a global humanitarian emergency, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent movement has demonstrated its commitment to road safety, including through the countless efforts of the Global Road Safety Partnership, working with Governments, the private sector and civil society to implement road safety programmes in the Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011-2020), now in its third year.

We welcome the Secretary-General's report (A/68/368), which outlines several high-profile events that attest to the recognition of the problem around the world and the solutions that Governments and other stakeholders must implement in order to reduce road traffic crashes and their consequences for public health and development. We also wish to echo the *Global Status Report on Road Safety 2013* of the World Health Organization (WHO), which reports that real progress has been made in improving road safety and saving lives. For instance, the annual number of road traffic deaths has not increased for the past three years. New road safety laws have been passed in 35 countries. Eighty-nine countries, representing 66 per cent of the world's population, now have comprehensive drink-driving laws. Ninety countries, representing 77 per cent of the world's population, have a comprehensive helmet law covering all riders, roads and engine types, and apply a helmet standard. Progress has also been made in extending seat-belt laws to include rear-seat passengers.

But considerable work must still be done for the goals and objectives of the Decade of Action to be realized. For instance, the *Global Status Report* stresses that only 59 countries, representing just 39 per cent of the world's population, have implemented an urban speed limit of 50 kilometres per hour or lower and allow local authorities to reduce those limits. It also states that transport policies neglect pedestrians and cyclists. Furthermore, while it is true that the annual number of road traffic deaths has not increased overall in the past three years, in 87 countries the number of deaths in the same period did increase, and while new road safety laws have been passed in 35 countries, only 7 per cent of the world's population is covered by comprehensive legislation. At more than 1.2 million lives lost every year, the global death toll remains too high.

The IFRC supports the urgent recommendation of the Secretary-General and WHO that Governments pass comprehensive legislation that meets best practices standards for all key risk factors in order to address this preventable cause of death, injury and disability. We also wish to encourage Member States to develop enforceable policies and laws that protect bystanders and first responders who provide assistance to the injured. Good Samaritan laws are very important in saving lives, as is support to crash victims by properly trained responders. To that end, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is building partnerships with the automobile and touring clubs of the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile. The IFRC Global First Aid Reference Centre aims to play an important role in strengthening that essential and indeed very direct link between first aid and road safety.

To underscore the vital importance of first aid in road safety, the theme of this year's World First Aid Day, an event that was introduced by the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in 2000, was "First aid and road safety". To date, more than 17 million people have learned first aid through courses, and 46 million people have received first aid and preventive messages. Within the Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies, there are today more than 36,000 active first aid trainers and 770,000 active volunteers.

The total number of voluntary hours in first aid given globally is at least 40 million per year.

The IFRC strongly believes that the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, with its 189 National Societies and approximately 15 million active volunteers, has an important role to play in reaching the goals of the Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011-2020). Only a few months ago, at our General Conference in Sydney, the Global Road Safety Partnership conducted two workshops highlighting the role National Societies can and do play in the Decade of Action. National Societies such as the Viet Nam Red Cross and the Tunisian Red Crescent work as auxiliaries to their Governments and advocate successfully for improved road safety legislation. They take a hands-on role and work with communities in educating children on road safety and with adults and teenagers on improved post-crash care. The workshops also focused attention on the IFRC pledge to work to improve road safety outcomes in the five pillars of the Decade of Action. Delegates from approximately 100 National Societies attended the workshops, and the takeaway was overwhelmingly positive.

It is certain that the road safety situation holds a high level of recognition within the Movement. There are countless examples of good practice initiatives being implemented and shared all over the globe and there is high level leadership commitment to building the capacity of National Societies to expand and enhance their work in the field through partnerships with the Global Road Safety Partnership.

But beyond the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement approach at the national level, we also recognize the need for global initiatives with global impacts. That is why the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) are looking at ways to collaborate and are identifying opportunities in which the dozens of National Societies and millions of volunteers can work together with the 235 automobile clubs with their 60 million members affiliated with the FIA. That kind of partnership could lead to initiatives with global impact.

Much more needs to be done to meet the goal of the Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011-2020), as evidenced in the *Global Status Report on Road Safety 2013: Supporting a Decade of Action*, particularly with regard to protecting vulnerable road users, adopting and enforcing good road safety laws and reducing the number of road traffic injuries and fatalities. As the Secretary-General has said,

> "A more systematic approach needs to be taken to address road safety issues across the five pillars outlined in the Global Plan for the Decade." (*A/68/368, para. 66*).

But the IFRC believes that the humanitarian crisis, with its enormous magnitude and very serious impacts on our economic, community, and family lives, requires international cooperation beyond just the sharing of good practices. The IFRC believes that such global partnerships and collaborations could create the impact needed to make a difference in the second half of the Decade of Action for Road Safety.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): We have heard the last speaker on this item. The General Assembly will now proceed to consider draft resolution A/68/L.40, entitled "Improving global road safety".

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Zhang Saijin (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/68/L.40: Algeria, Andorra, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Czech Republic, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mongolia, Montenegro, Mozambique, Norway, Qatar, the Republic of Moldova, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, the United States of America, Uzbekistan and Yemen.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to adopt draft resolution A/68/L.40?

Draft resolution A/68/L.40 was adopted (resolution 68/269).

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 12?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.